

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

AID-05 OMB-01 SAM-01 AF-06 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

EB-07 TRSE-00 OPIC-03 OPR-02 SY-05 USSS-00 OTPE-00

OC-05 CCO-00 A-01 /090 W
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O R 291146Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4421

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5713

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: GOP OCCUPIES RADIO AND TV

REFS: LISBON 5698 DTG 271250Z SEP 75

SUMMARY: AZEVEDO ORDERED MILITARY OCCUPATION OF ALL RADIO AND
TV STATIONS AT 8 A.M. SEPT 29. AZEVEDO'S COMMUNIQUE, SIGNED
IN HIS CAPACITY AS ACTING PRESIDENT, CITED RECENT EXAMPLES OF
INDISCIPLINE ENCOURAGED BY RADIO AND TV BROADCASTS. AZEVEDO'S
DRAMATIC ACTION, FOLLOWING CREATION OF MILITARY INTERVENTION
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GROUP (AMI), IS FIRST SIGN THAT GOP MAY BE WILLING TO TAKE TOUGH

LINE. QUESTION IS HOW FAR AZEVEDO PREPARED TO GO AND HOW MUCH SUPPORT HE CAN GET FROM AN ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT RELUCTANT TO MOVE AGAINST THE LEFT. END SUMMARY.

1. HIGHLIGHTS OF 8 A.M. SEPT 29 COMMUNIQUE FROM THE PRESIDENCY ANNOUNCING MILITARY TAKEOVER OF RADIO AND TV STATIONS FOLLOW:

-- RECENT EROSION OF PUBLIC ORDER, AS EXEMPLIFIED BY ACTIONS OF DISABLED VETERANS, BREAKDOWN OF MILITARY DISCIPLINE IN SOME UNITS, AND PROVOCATIVE AND INSUBORDINATE CAMPAIGN BY CERTAIN SECTORS OF MEDIA, NOTABLY RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS, IS UNDERMINING CIVIC AND MORAL FOUNDATIONS OF NATION, PUTTING REVOLUTION IN QUESTION, AND CREATING "DE FACTO SITUATION OF REAL NATIONAL EMERGENCY."

-- WHAT BEGAN AS SIMPLE CLAIMS ON THE PART OF DISABLED VETERANS REACHED ITS CULMINATION IN AN ATTEMPT TO KIDNAP THE CABINET AND THE THREAT TO PARALYZE THE CAPITAL.

-- PRIME MINISTER, WITH SUPPORT OF REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AND GOVERNMENT, HAS ORDERED OCCUPATION OF RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS BY MILITARY.

-- OCCUPATION IS TEMPORARY MEASURE TAKEN TO AVOID FORMAL DECLARATION OF STATE OF EMERGENCY AND RESTRICTIONS ON EXERCISE OF NORMAL CIVIL LIBERTIES SUCH A MOVE WOULD ENTAIL. IT WILL LEAD TO REESTABLISHMENT OF FREE, RESPONSIBLE PLURALISTIC MEDIA AT THE SERVICE OF TWO GREAT GOALS OF REVOLUTION: NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIALIST SOCIETY.

-- PRIME MINISTER WILL SPEAK TO NATION LATER TODAY (SEPT 29).

2. THE COMMUNIQUE WAS SIGNED BY AZEVEDO IN HIS CAPACITY AS ACTING PRESIDENT IN ABSENCE OF COSTA GOMES.

3. SHORTLY AFTER READING OF COMMUNIQUE, EMISSORA NACIONAL (EN) ANNOUNCED THAT PARATROOPS HAD OCCUPIED STATION. RADIO CLUBE PORTUGUES ANNOUNCED AT 9:25 A.M. THAT MILITARY WAS REMOVING STATION PERSONNEL FROM STUDIOS AFTER THEY REFUSED TO COMPLY WITH "CENSORSHIP ORDERS."

4. COMMENT: TODAY'S ACTION IS ENCOURAGING. IT FOLLOWS A SERIES OF EVENTS SUGGESTING THAT LISBON WAS MOVING RAPIDLY TOWARDS ANARCHY. THE RELEASE OF MILITARY PRISONERS IN THE FACE OF A MOB BY THE MAN (OTELO) IN CHARGE OF NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES; CONFIDENTIAL

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THE BLOCKING OF ROADS, STOPPING OF TOLL COLLECTIONS ON HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES; BARRICADING OF APPROACHES TO THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE; AND FINALLY THE ATTEMPTED KIDNAPPING OF THE CABINET BY THE DISABLED VETERANS (SEPTEL); AND THE UNIMPEDED SACKING OF SPANISH DIPLOMATIC INSTALLATIONS DESPITE PERSONAL CALLS BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO ARMY CHIEF FABIAO AND COPCON HEAD OTELO HAD LED MANY TO BELIEVE THAT SOCIALDISSOLUTION IN PORTUGAL HAD REACHED POINT OF NO RETURN.

5. A RELIABLE EMBASSY SOURCE TOLD DCM THAT AZEVEDO ASSURED SOARES AT THE END OF LAST WEEK THAT HE INTENDED TO TAKE A "TOUGH LINE." IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE FIRST DECISIVE ACTION WAS TAKEN WHILE COSTA GOMES, A MAN WHO PREFERS TO AVOID CONFRONTATIONS, WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY.

6. MILITARY INCLUDED RADIO RENASCENCA IN TAKEOVER. THIS OFFERS GOVERNMENT A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO DEAL WITH TICKLISH PROBLEM OF WORKER TAKEOVER OF CATHOLIC-OWNED RENASCENCA.

7. COMING ON THE HEELS OF THE CREATION OF THE MILITARY INTERVENTION GROUP (AMI) (REFTEL), AZEVEDO'S ACTION IS FIRST REAL INDICATION THAT THE GOP IS PREPARED TO DEAL WITH SERIOUS LAW AND ORDER SITUATION. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT'S RELUCTANCE TO MOVE AGAINST THE LEFT, AZEVEDO IS GOING TO HAVE A HARD TIME BACKING UP HIS TOUGH LINE, ASSUMING HE REALLY INTENDS TO MAKE MORE THAN A TOKEN EFFORT AT RESTORING ORDER.

AZEVEDO'S FORTHCOMING SPEECH TODAY WILL BE AN IMPORTANT INDICATOR OF HIS INTENTIONS.

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